



Montana Department of Corrections
Victim-Offender Dialogue

FACILITATOR GUIDELINES

Preface

DOC recognizes there currently is no local, state or national authority that certifies Victim-Offender Dialogue (VOD) facilitators. In the absence of such an entity, volunteer facilitators will be uniformly screened by the Victim Programs Manager (VPM) in consultation with at least one VOD trainer endorsed by the U.S. Department of Justice National Institute of Corrections (NIC). Prospective volunteer facilitators must pass a criminal background check, demonstrate empathy, compassion and interpersonal skills, and have an understanding of confidentiality, behavioral characteristics and dynamics of offenders, and the ripple effects and after effects of violent and sexual crimes on victims, offenders and the community. Facilitators must also complete the following training requirements.

Training

- (1) Complete at least 20 hours of basic “victim-centered” VOD training under qualified restorative justice trainers. On a case-by-case basis, the Victim Programs Manager in consultation with qualified trainers may instead approve a volunteer facilitator with a demonstrated understanding of victim-centered restorative justice and a combination of training in sentencing circles, civil or criminal mediation, conferencing, conflict resolution, and/or juvenile justice programs.
- (2) Complete at least 30 hours of advanced victim offender dialogue training under a qualified trainer as described in the preface. At least 20 hours of training must focus on crimes of severe violence.
- (3) Observe or co-facilitate at least two actual Victim-Offender Dialogues involving sexual crimes and/or crimes that resulted in serious bodily injury or death. Role plays are not recognized as cases.
- (4) Agree to adhere to DOC policies governing the VOD process: *DOC Policies 1.3.16, Volunteer Services; 1.8.1, Victim Services; and 1.8.1A Victim Services Standard Operations Procedure Guide*.
- (5) Sign the Department’s [Volunteer Service Agreement](#).
- (6) Provide the VPM with a resume of restorative justice experience, and a statement of understanding of victim/survivor and offender issues, and personal commitment to the victim-centered VOD process.
- (7) Participate in interviews with the VPM and others involved in the victim-offender dialogue process to discuss his/her mediation/facilitation qualifications, personal style and experiences as victims/survivors, if applicable, and to discover attitudes or behaviors that might enhance or detract from the success of the VOD preparation and dialogue process.
- (8) Maintain close contact with the VPM and other Department staff during the victim-offender dialogue preparation process and follow-up. The VPM agrees to be readily available for consultation at the facilitator’s request.